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PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBO #8694 362213Z
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 282132Z DEC 07
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0705
INFO RUEHSW/AMEMBASSY BERN PRIORITY 1368
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 7965
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY 2114
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 9714
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ DEC 9154
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY 5750
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY 1017
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 1170
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 6455
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL PRIORITY 4242
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA PRIORITY 0160
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY

UNCLAS BOGOTA 008694

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: VENEZUELAN / ICRC HOSTAGE RECOVERY MISSION SET FOR
DECEMBER 29-30

REF: A. BOGOTA 8657

[1](#)B. CARACAS 2398

[1](#)1. The Colombian Government announced on December 28 that it had authorized a VeQuelan-led, international delegation -- operating in conjunction with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) -- to recover three FARC-held hostages between 1700 EST December 27 and 1700 EST December 30 in Colombian territory (reftels). The GOC authorized Venezuela to deploy three fixed wing aircraft and two helicopters, operating with ICRC markings, to Vanguardia airport in the Meta Department capitol of Villavicencio in the first phase of the mission. Aircraft were scheduled to be deployed from Santo Domingo (Tachira), Venezuela at approximately 1500 EST, December 28. The helicopters would then depart from Villavicencio to recover the hostages at a time/location to be determined on December 29 or 30.

[1](#)2. ICRC chief in Colombia Barbara Hintermann said the recovery phase of the operation would not occur prior to December 29, to allow time for aircraft to be deployed and prepared, and since the ICRC would not conduct nighttime operations over security concerns. Peace Commissioner Luis Carlos Restrepo, GOC coordinator for the mission, confirmed that the GOC, GOV and ICRC remained in permanent contact to coordinate mission details. He said that the hostages (expected to be Clara Rojas, her son Emmanuel, and Consuelo Gonzales de Perdomo) and the delegation would fly directly to Venezuela once hostages are recovered to meet hostage family members.

[1](#)3. We have no information indicating that any American hostages (or Ingrid Betancourt) will be released in this operation. Some family members of hostages remaining in FARC custody have provided letters and other materials to delegation members requesting they be passed to the FARC. In addition to representatives from Venezuela, Argentina, Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, and France, the Swiss have reportedly been asked to join the mission. Argentine Foreign Minister Jorge Taiana, former-President Nestor Kirchner, and Brazilian presidential advisor Marco Aurelio Garcia, among others, are

expected to participate.

Nichols